



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
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NRCS Approaching 75 Years

ST. PAUL, MN, January 19, 2010)—U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will turn 75 on April 27, 2010.

"During these years, the NRCS has led the nation in protecting our natural resources," said Jennifer Heglund, Acting State Conservationist in Minnesota.

"We have followed the lead of the first chief of our agency, Hugh Hammond Bennett, who envisioned the agency's soil conservationists to work one on one with producers on private and tribal lands and to walk the land to develop a conservation plan," she said.

"Programs and technology have provided many changes in delivering our services, but working with the producer/landowner and getting conservation on the ground remains NRCS's number one priority," said Heglund.

"That priority is reflected in our agency's mission, 'Helping People Help the Land,'" she said.

Conservation practices carried out by farmers and other landowners in Minnesota have improved the quality of life and built stronger rural communities. Agency statistics show dramatic improvements in Minnesota's natural resources because of conservation practices such as crop rotations, terraces, waterways, windbreaks, wetlands, no-till farming, buffers, ponds, nutrient and pest management, to name a few.

"The 75 years of success of NRCS can be attributed to dedicated producers, agency employees, local county conservation district board supervisors and staff, and partners, all of whom worked together to accomplish the goal of protecting our natural resources—soil, water, air, plants, and animals," said Heglund.

"This agency's rich conservation legacy has resulted in many benefits to the state's citizens—abundant food and fiber, clean water, clean air, productive soils, and open spaces to use and enjoy," she said.

NRCS was created as the Soil Conservation Service within USDA on April 27, 1935, in response to the devastation of the Dust Bowl on the nation's agricultural land. The agency's primary mission then was to conserve soil on agricultural land. It became NRCS in 1994 to better reflect its expanded role of servicing other natural resources such as soil, water, air, plants, and animals on private and tribal lands.

For more information about NRCS in Minnesota, visit <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/> or stop by your local county USDA Service Center.

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